

Please amend Claims 1, 10, 14, 18, 20 and 22 as shown in the attached

Appendix. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

- A*
file
B
1. (Amended) An image input apparatus comprising:
conversion means for converting an image signal into digital information;
encryption means for encrypting the digital information by using an
encryption key; and
erasing means for erasing said encryption key coincident with completion of
the digital information being encrypted by the encryption means.
 2. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according
to claim 1, wherein said encryption means encrypts the digital information which has
undergone a high-efficiency coding operation.
 3. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according
to claim 1, further comprising image pick-up means for optically picking up an image of a
subject and for generating an image signal from the picked-up image.
 4. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according
to claim 1, further comprising means for inputting said encryption key from an external
source.

5. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising means for generating said encryption key within said image input apparatus.

6. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said encryption key comprises an encryption key based on a common key cryptosystem.

7. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said encryption key comprises an encryption key based on a public key cryptosystem.

8. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising means for inputting from an external source another encryption key for encrypting said encryption key.

9. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said encryption key comprises an encryption key based on a common key cryptosystem, and said other encryption key comprises an encryption key based on a public key cryptosystem.

10. (Amended) An image input method comprising the steps of:
converting an image signal into digital information;
encrypting the digital information by using an encryption key; and
erasing said encryption key coincident with completion of the digital
information being encrypted in the encrypting step.

11. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input method according
to claim 10, wherein the digital information which has undergone a highefficiency coding
operation is encrypted.

12. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input method according
to claim 10, wherein the image signal generated from an optically picked up image of a
subject is converted into the digital information.

13. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input method according
to claim 10, wherein said encryption key comprises an encryption key based on one of a
common key cryptosystem and a public key cryptosystem.

14. (Amended) An encryption processing program stored in a
computer-readable medium, comprising:
a step of converting an image signal into digital information;
a step of encrypting the digital information by using an encryption key; and

a step of erasing said encryption key coincident with completion of the digital information being encrypted in the encrypting step.

18. (Amended) An image input apparatus comprising:

conversion means for converting an image signal into digital information;

information encryption means for encrypting the digital information by

using an internal encryption key disposed within said image input apparatus;

means for inputting from an external source an external encryption key for encrypting said internal encryption key;

key encryption means for encrypting said internal encryption key by using said external encryption key; and

erasing means for erasing both the internal encryption key and the external encryption key coincident with completion of encrypting the external encryption key by the key encryption means.

19. (Not Changed From Prior Version) An image input apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said internal encryption key comprises an encryption key based on a common key cryptosystem, and said external encryption key comprises an encryption key based on a public key cryptosystem.

20. (Amended) An image input method comprising the steps of:

converting an image signal into digital information;

encrypting the digital information by using an internal encryption key
disposed within said image input apparatus;
obtaining from an external source an external encryption key for encrypting
said internal encryption key;
encrypting said internal encryption key by using said external encryption
key; and
erasing both the internal encryption key and the external encryption key
coincident with completion of the step of encrypting the internal encryption key using the
external encryption key.

22. (Amended) An encryption processing program stored in a
computer-readable medium, comprising:
a step of converting an image signal into digital information;
a step of encrypting the digital information by using an internal encryption
key disposed within an image input apparatus;
a step of obtaining from an external source an external encryption key for
encrypting said internal encryption key;
a step of encrypting said internal encryption key by using said external
encryption key; and
a step of erasing both the internal encryption key and the external encryption
key coincident with completion of the step of encrypting the internal encryption key.